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DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/RD/SCA, DS/DSS/ITA, CA AND SA/INS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: EMBASSY COLOMBO EAC MEETING 01/20/2010

¶1. (SBU) Summary: AmEmbassy Colombo convened an Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meeting on January 20, 2010. The EAC discussed post's security posture in light of the upcoming Sri Lanka presidential elections on January 26. The EAC discussed elections violence, threat information, arrangements for Mission employees' access to USG facilities if the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) declares a curfew, the Mission emergency notification (Cascade) system, and notifications to the expatriate American citizen (Amcit) community. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) On January 20, 2010, AmEmbassy Colombo convened an EAC meeting. Present for the meeting were the Deputy Chief of Mission, Regional Security Officer, Regional Affairs Officer, Political Officer, Economic Officer, Management Officer, Consular Officer, Public Affairs Officer, USAID Director, Defense Attache', Office of Defense Cooperation Chief, Marine Security Guard Detachment Commander, International Broadcasting Bureau Station Chief, Community Liaison Officer, and Medical Officer. The agenda items for the meeting were:

- The January 26 nationwide presidential election campaign and election-related violence;
- Threats, if any, the violence poses for the official and expatriate Amcit communities;
- Contingencies for maintaining Mission operations and transportation for Embassy personnel if the GSL declares a curfew after election day;
- Testing the Embassy emergency notification (Cascade) system; and,
- A Warden message for the expatriate Amcit community.

¶3. (SBU) The EAC discussed the upcoming election and the incidents of election-related violence. Some media sources have reported that the Sri Lanka Police Service (SLPS) received 728 complaints of election violence, including four deaths, from December 18, 2009 to January 19, 2010. However, to date post had received no reports that Amcits had been victims of any of the incidents. RSO, RAO, POL and DATT opined, and the EAC concurred, that the violence was unlikely to target Amcits or American interests directly. On the other hand, Amcits could blunder into a violent demonstration or into proximity with other election violence - i.e. be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

¶4. (SBU) The EAC discussed the possibility of the GSL declaring a curfew after the elections. Locally engaged staff members and EmbOffs' various Sri Lankan contacts conjectured, based on past experience, that the GSL would declare a curfew, after polling concluded and in advance of the announcement of the outcome. RSO's Foreign Service National Investigator (FSNI) contacted police sources, who also believed that a curfew, lasting 24 to 48 hours, would follow

the election regardless of the result of the voting. FSNI believed that the SLPS would issue a limited amount of "curfew passes" to the Mission for embassy vehicles. However, the curfew was likely to affect Embassy operations by severely limiting the number of personnel who could report to work. In that regard, the EAC recommended that the MGT Officer and RSO develop contingency plans for maintaining limited operations during the curfew.

¶5. (SBU) The RSO noted that post would conduct a drill of the Embassy Emergency Notification system prior to the election day. Additionally, the CONS chief will draft a Warden notice to alert the non-official Amcit community of the possibility of a curfew and measures to take in the event of a curfew. (Note: After receipt of Washington clearance, post disseminated the message January 21 to the official and non-official Amcit communities.) The EAC agreed that these steps were prudent in light of unfolding events.

¶6. (U) Post will continue to monitor the security environment and report further developments, if any, septel. POC for this message is RSO Michael V. Perkins, who may be contacted at 94.11.249.8885, 94.11.249.8888 (MSG Post 1 after regular business hours), or via the classified and unclassified email systems.
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